

**Peggy and Patty;**

OR,

**THE SISTERS**

OF

**ASHDALE.**

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IN FOUR VOLUMES..

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VOL. II.

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## PEGGY AND PATTY.

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### LETTER XI.

*Miss Harvey, to Miss Waller.*

Moss Hill.

**T**HERE is an old saying, my Lucy, "that one misfortune  
" seldom comes alone : " I can truly  
affirm the *truth* of this same adage.  
— Could I have imagined the Fates,  
having bereft me of my Peggy and  
Patty, should so soon — so very

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soon,

soon, have deprived me also of you! my charming friend, my guide, and my instructress? — This stroke is indeed too much: — But hold! — am I not too selfish? I fear I am; — away then these *narrow-minded* murmurings: — let me rather rejoice that you, my dear Miss Waller, are happy, and making all around you so; — and that the sweet girls of Ashdale are most happily arrived in London — have met with an extreme affectionate friend in their good cousin Benner; and are, in short, in the high road of happiness and advantage to themselves, and comfort to their parents: — a charming letter arrived,

arrived, my friend, last night, with the above particulars, to Ashdale. — Idle girls ! they have not yet sent me a single line, but I forgive them.

O my Lucy ! never did I *require* or *wish* for your *advice* so much as at this moment, for I have *such* a subject to mention ! — Good Heavens ! surely my father must be out of his senses ! — But let me lead to it as well as I can, for my poor heart has not yet done fluttering since I heard it. — “ Heard what ? ” you say ; — have a moment’s patience, and you will know : — — My father, last night, being just re-

turned from a journey, called me into the garden to take a walk ;— this *unusual* kindness surprized me ; —when, after a profound silence of some minutes, he turned round, and abruptly asked, “ Well! girl, have “ you any objection to a husband?” — I blushed as red as scarlet, not dreaming what he had to communicate. After some little trembling hesitation, I replied— “ As to objection, sir, — as to the “ state of marriage — it may be a “ very happy one if the parties “ love each other; but, as my “ chief objection ” — here my father violently interrupted me,— “ What

" What a parcel of *woman's cant* is  
 " here!—your *objection*—and your  
 " *chief objection*—and a pack of  
 " stuff and nonsense! — I did not  
 " call you out to hear *your objec-*  
 " *tions*, but to *order* you to put on  
 " your best looks, and your best  
 " bib and tucker, on Monday next,  
 " as 'squire Branville, a gentleman  
 " of great fortune (you must have  
 " heard of him) will come to look  
 " upon you, and also upon some  
 " *young colts* I have to dispose of."  
 —I was thunderstruck. — " Mr.  
 " Branville!" (said I, when I reco-  
 vered the use of my faculties)—" I  
 " have always heard him spoken of

" as a gentleman very greatly ad-  
 " vanced in age ! " — " In age ! "   
 (said my father) " pray, miss, hold  
 " your tongue : — he has three thou-  
 " sand a year ; and as he will take  
 " you with *nothing down*, he *shall*  
 " have you : — at my death, if you  
 " marry with my approbation, you  
 " shall have all my fortune ; but  
 " if not," (and he swore a great  
 oath) " not one shilling shall you  
 " possess ! — my brother Peter  
 " has children." — " But, good  
 " God ! " (said I) " how know you  
 " that Mr. Branville may like me ? "   
 — " He has," said he, " his *rea-*  
 " sons for marrying, and will like  
 " you

" you as well as any other young  
" girl of eighteen : — mark me,  
" Emma ! I will have no squeamish  
" mincing ; — the affair is already  
" settled ; — 'tis a *done* thing. — He  
" has two fine seats ; one near *Lon-*  
" *don* : I suppose *that* will satisfy  
" you." — " If you please, sir,  
" to *consult* my mamma." — He  
flew into a violent rage : — " *Con-*  
" *sult* ! — your *mother* ! — Do ye  
" think I would ever *consult* a  
" woman ? — *Consult*, indeed ! —  
" No ! my decrees are as absolute  
" as those of the Medes and Per-  
" sians." — We were now sum-  
moned to supper, but whilst we



were going to the house he turned round, — " Be sure you mind how " you behave on Monday next." — " I will take care " (said I) " not " to *laugh*." — This, my Lucy, you will say, was too *pert* an answer : my father, however, heard me not, which was lucky. — Imagine, my dear, what a night I have spent ! I see — I see the whole affair : — my father is going to sacrifice me to this man, because he will take me with *nothing down*, as he calls it. — O ! my friend, for heaven's sake write to me. I think I have often heard you accidentally mention the name of this *dreaded* Mr. Branville,



as having seen him in some public place, I forget where: tell me—tell me what is his character, I conjure you, as soon as possible:—but, alas I was it the worst, *that*, I fear, would make no difference with my despotic father. He has mentioned the affair to my mamma, not as *consulting* her (for, as a *woman*, he holds her below every thing of *judging* for her child) but merely as an *upper servant*, to give her *orders* that all things may be on Monday in the greatest order, relative to dinner, &c.

Is it not extraordinary, my Lucy, that parents in general think *money*

(even more tender ones than my father) the *one thing needful*? How many poor unhappy girls are sacrificed to this consideration only! Would you believe it, my dear, that my excellent mother, good and tender to me as she has ever been, to a remarkable degree, is delighted with this alliance above all description? She entered my chamber this morning, with a smile, which I have not seen her languid face a long while wear;—"So, Emma!—what an amazing match, my beloved child, " will *this* be!" ——"What, madam?" (said I; willing to hear her opinion)—"Your father" (said she,

she, her eye sparkling with joy)  
 " has told me the great and good  
 " Mr. Branville, if he *likes* you—  
 " and who can *dislike* my Emma?"  
 (said my too-fond, partial mother)  
 " will make you his wife!—Good  
 " heavens!" (continued the dear  
 woman, taking out her snuff-box,  
 which is, you know, the *accompany-*  
*ment* of these sort of *matrimonial*  
 conferences) " who could ever have  
 " thought of *such* an alliance!—  
 " the character of the man so *unex-*  
 " *ceptionable.*"——" Ah! my dear  
 " madam, are we not too apt to  
 " confound our ideas in speaking  
 " of the *rich*, and to fancy, that  
 " because

“ because they possess affluence,  
 “ they possess likewise every de-  
 “ sirable quality of the mind? But  
 “ I beg this gentleman’s pardon,—  
 “ he may be very *good*, as well as  
 “ *rich*: — I always thought, for I  
 “ have often heard his name men-  
 “ tioned, that he was a *very—very*  
 “ old man.”——“ And suppose he  
 “ is, my child,” (said my mother)  
 “ *twenty* years older than yourself,  
 “ what then? In short, I had rather  
 “ see you, Emma, married to even  
 “ a *very old, good* man, than to a  
 “ *young libertine*, though even the  
 “ first duke in the land.” — Much  
 more conversation, my dear friend,  
 had

had we on this subject, — but my mother, not finding me so much overjoyed as she imagined every girl in England must be at the *prospect* of so much happiness, left me, she said, to consider on the comforts of being united to a *good* man. (Dear madam, thought I, you do not, I am convinced, separate the *riches* from the *man*; for that will make, as the poet says, “Foul, fair —— black, white” — &c. &c.) — “You have, my dear,” (said she) “no *prior* engagement, I “am certain, therefore *pray consent* “with a *good grace*.” —— Saying which, she left the room. ——

Ah!

Ah! my dear Lucy—suppose—suppose, after all—what you have long suspected—namely, that I have *no* heart to bestow:—that the amiable Edward, the stranger, at the Grove Farm (though he knows it not) reigns triumphant in this hapless bosom of mine!—What is to be done?—My secret attachment, you will say, must be overcome:—well! I will do all I can.—Write, my friend, as speedily as may be, to *relieve*, or at least to *advise* my distressed mind.

The preparations that are making for this visit of my *destined* lover, make my very heart sick;—at least,  
the

the apprehension that I shall be *made* to marry him, already makes me so. Our old mansion is turning topsyturvy—windows cleaning, floors dry-rubbing, furniture moving, plate and china, which have not seen the light since the day your Emma was *christened*, are now brought forth;—chickens and ducks set up to fatten; the tapestry parlour brushing, and the old Persian carpet laid down already:—my poor mother is here, there, and every where at once: she is really ten years younger, she gives her orders with such alacrity. —Mr. Branville is to sleep here, I find, on Monday night, so that all “hands  
“ are



“are aloft” to set in order the crimson mohair bed. My dear mother has just brought me a large quantity of old family *tape lace*, to decorate a toilet for this best bed-chamber; “Come, Emma,” (said she) “you must do something in this time of hurry;—you are *ingenious*, now let me see, what a *smart* affair you will make of all this” — laying the materials down.—“Ah, madam!” (said I sighing) “I have no ingenuity — not a grain of skill in decorating a toilet.”—“Fie fie, Emma,” (said my mother, yet smiling) “I am really angry — why this reluctance?”



"ance? was it really for the wed-

"ding-night *itself*, you could not

"put on a more dismal face."—

"Ah!" (said I) "name it not."—

My father then joined us, which stopped our discourse:—he is overwhelmed with business. —Our old man, Jacob, is to have a new livery —the grass walks are already begun mowing, and the garden is full of *weeder*s: in short, the old venerable pile of Moss-hill house, and its environs, is undergoing a total alteration of modernizing. Surely, my Lucy, there must be something in a wedding peculiarly delightful, when even the most distant prospect

of one gives such an alacrity ! —  
 yes, my sweet friend, it must, indeed,  
 be delightful, where, as the old song  
 says,

“ Two fond hearts in one unite.”

But adieu, adieu ; I must hasten to  
 decorate the *toilet*. Pity, and write to,  
 your most affectionate,  
 distressed,

*Emma.*

P. S. The above was written two  
 days ago, waiting to send to the  
 post ; — but I unseal it again to add  
 a curious postscript ; which is no less,  
 than that a servant is just arrived  
 from my lover *dear*, with the melan-  
 choly

choly news, that his poor master was seized yesterday with the gout in both feet; (an *annual* fit, I understand;) so that it will be impossible, the servant says, for him to travel for many weeks; as he is generally laid up, he says, a considerable time every year with this disease.—Fine encouragement for a wife!—Our preparations are now slackening for the present:—my father says, this *temporary* fit of the gout will only *retard* the *disposing* of me and the *colts* a little longer.—I shall, however, have some respite for a few weeks, or months; for the gentleman is, I hear, confined to his bed

at present.—Write—write, I beg, as soon as possible.

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L E T T E R    X I I .

*Miss Waller, to Miss Harvey.*

West-grove, Northamptonshire.

**A**ND so, your humble servant, good Mrs. Branville!—Upon my word, Emma, you manage finely!—a little *country-bred girl*, in the very depth of the Cumberland moors and mountains, to pick up a man of upwards of three thousand a year—a coach and six—two fine seats, and I know not how many other fine things, the appendages of so large a fortune! —Pro.

—Prodigious! — and all this done, forsooth, in the most clever manner imaginable; without giving yourself the least trouble or thought about it. Whilst I, your poor unfortunate Lucy, in spite of dressing, dancing, singing, &c. &c. and figuring away with my good aunt, at half the watering places, for these last five years of my life, am, in all likelihood, doomed to write *spinster* as long as I live. Is not this provoking? — At last, I suppose, if I do not chuse to remain in this (as Shakespear calls it)

“Single state of blessedness,”  
I shall probably commence the wife

of some country curate, in some little dirty village an hundred miles from London,—be the mother of half a score squalling brats—and ride to church behind my husband, over a bleak common, perhaps thrice a year—whilst you,

—“ happy, happy Emma !

“ Your angel has been watchful o’er its  
“ charge.”

I positively, child, shall pull caps with you about this Mr. Branville. I once drest *at* him, but it would not do.—But did good Mrs. Harvey put you in a tremor, by only desiring you to decorate the toilet in his bed-chamber ?—O dear !—I hope to live to drink *candle*, yet, in your lady-

ladyship's, on a *certain* occasion, for I shall not at all despair of a son and heir.—“Wicked, abominable Lucy!” you cry—Well! but now I will be grave and good, like yourself.—And now for some very serious advice.—Indeed, from the bottom of my soul, my dear Emma, the very wisest, best thing you can do, will be to marry this man.—Your father (pardon me, my friend) is of that *despotic* disposition, that he *never* will give his consent to a match merely of your own choice, nor to any other that is not of his *very own* choosing:—but really, setting Mr. Harvey's passion for money entirely



aside, there is no father in England but would as eagerly rejoice as himself, in such an alliance as Mr. Branville's—the character of the man so unexceptionable! his fortune so noble!—I have seen him, some years since, at Bath, and he was universally esteemed as a man free from all vice, and of great sobriety:—he is a remarkable well-looking man of his years; nay, I think, handsome:—I assure you, half a score of us girls at Bath were ready to pull caps for him:—and yet you, Emma, are ready to turn up your nose at this man!—Ah! my dear, had not a certain little partiality



tiality taken place, for a *certain*  
 young man, not an hundred miles  
 from Moss-hill, you would then  
 have seen with the same eyes that  
 your good mamma, myself, and every  
 indifferent person must do, in this  
 business : — you *wilfully* shut your  
 eyes against the merits of a man  
 whom you have never yet seen, and  
 even make a *jest* of, I assure you, a  
 very respectable character. — Is this  
 just? — is it grateful? — But now for  
 a word or two of the gentle Edward  
 at the Grove-farm. It is absolutely  
 impossible that ever you can be  
 united, at least during your father's  
 life, who would just as soon think  
 of

of coupling you with any inferior animal that ranges in his pastures, as give you to a young man, an utter stranger: besides, after all, my dear little romantic girl, how know you that this gentle swain *likes you*? for you say he has never told you that he does.—“ Why (you cry) he met  
 “ me once going a *nutting*, and,  
 “ having endangered his life in  
 “ fording a deep stream, to recover  
 “ a little dog, near drowning, of  
 “ mine, he climb’d the loftiest  
 “ hawel-trees in the copse, to pro-  
 “ cure me Alberta, and because I  
 “ complained of thirst, ran, unknown  
 “ to me, to a neighbouring farm,  
 “ and

“and procured a fillabub from  
 “under the cow.”—Very kind and  
 civil, this, most certainly!—and you  
 add, “that he presented you, last  
 spring, with the *sweetest* nosegay  
 that ever grew in the gardens even  
 of Arcadia, — that at church he  
 sighs, and looks in so pitiable a  
 manner, that you cannot, for the  
 life of you, read your prayer-book  
 with the proper attention!” you add,  
 “that he has been met many times  
 by moon-light, lately, wandering on  
 the banks of the great pond, in the  
 middle of the heath, near your  
 house, —that you apprehend,” (my  
 sweet, little, simple friend!)—“some  
*tragic*

*tragical catastrophe*, and that (lastly) on happening to call at your father's, with the gentleman at whose house he is residing, on your unfortunately stumbling over a branch of a tree (when you were all walking in the garden) he rushed forth from the group, raised you in his arms, and exclaimed, "*O, Miss Harvey! are you hurt?*"—Now, child, you will have it, that there was something so expressive in the looks, the voice, and *manner* of this youth, whilst he uttered those few words, that they *said* more, (as you say) than a volume of love-letters. Now, for the soul of me, I cannot see this.—You sentimental

mental girls, who live retired in the country, become wonderfully *susceptible* of the soft passion, and fancy every man you see, is your *lover*.— But, my dear girl, take my word for it, was you a few weeks in the gay world, you would then see that that kind of *exclamation* you talk of, for the *care* of your person, is nothing on earth but mere *words of course*. Nothing so common, child, as to hear a young fellow, so attentive one day to a fair lady, as to be even in pain “lest the winds of heaven should visit her face too roughly,”—(you will find this expression in your Shakespear)—and after he has told her,

her, perhaps, at a *ball*, "that death  
 " alone can make him cease to adore  
 " her"—this very man, when he sees  
 her the next morning at the pump-  
 room, has totally forgot he ever  
 saw her in his life before.—Words  
 —mere words of course.—A man  
 may walk by moon-light, my sweet  
 girl, and present a lady with a nose-  
 gay, and yet never dream of love.—  
 But the case is this, my Emma, you  
 are *yourself* in love with this young  
 man,—and this unaccountable pas-  
 sion, among its other strange effects,  
 converts every thing you see into  
*love*; 'as the philosopher's stone con-  
 verts every thing it touches to gold.

It

It is wonderful, methinks, you have never heard, who, or what, this young gentleman is;—you call him, the agreeable stranger, and, the gentle Edward; but that, I understand, is only his Christian name: Does not that little romantic head of yours, child, fancy he is some wandering prince, or knight in disguise? —But I should imagine the shooting season in Cumberland—on which account, you say, this *lovely unknown* (to speak in the language of romance) came into your country—is now pretty well over; therefore we will drop the *Arcadian* subject, after I have most earnestly begged you, my dear

Emma,



Emma, not to indulge so simple and visionary, so hopeless and idle a *penchant*.

And now a few words of Mr. Branville, and I have done:—Indeed, his character, as far as I have heard, is *unexceptionable*. A few little oddities, (for oddities there are in every character) you must, however, overlook, such as his extreme formality:—with regard to our sex, (but this I do not mention as a foible) he is most rigidly scrupulous as to any *indelicacies* in their behaviour; and with respect to the imprudence and levities too often seen in women, he is beyond measure violent



violent in his censures,—in his opinion, as the old poet Hudibras says,

“ The nation ne’er will thrive,

“ Till all the wh—es are burnt alive.”

I have been told, lest the damsels of his household (his servant maids) should be in danger (were they beautiful) of being seduced by his footmen, that such a set of *scarecrows* were never seen:—the housekeeper herself I have seen, and she is absolutely a fright; the rest, I am told, are perfect *antidotes* to desire. ‘Tis amazing to me how a man, “ whose blood,” (to use an expression in Shakespear) “ is very *snow-broth*,”

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could

could ever think of a *woman*!—  
 (what a madcap, my grave Emma,  
 you will call me for this!)—much  
 more how it should \* now enter his  
 head to take a wife:—you say, your  
 father told you, “he had *reasons* for  
 “marrying;”—reasons? what can  
 they be, I trow.—I have a sort of  
 laudable pride, my dear, in reflect-  
 ing, how this man will, on the know-  
 ledge of your virtues, your uniform  
 conduct in all things, be ashamed of  
 having so long *contemned* one half of  
 the creation.

\* It was impossible this lady should know  
 the real motive which induced Mr. Bran-  
 ville to marry, which was merely to disin-  
 herit his nephew.

He has a nephew (a most amiable young man, as I have been told, for I have never seen him) of whom he has been always immoderately fond, and who has been educated with the certain hopes of being his *heir*; how will he brook the disappointment, in case your ladyship should produce a little Branville?

This most worthy and agreeable family where I am, are continually contriving parties of pleasure to amuse your Lucy: — this evening we are going to a ball at Northampton: — I shall wish for you, as I have never pleasure in so high a degree, as when those I love share it

D 2

with

with me. But perhaps it would be no pleasure to you to be in a crowded ball-room; — you, who are fond of wandering in woods—listening to the moaning stock-dove: —I will allow you, my dear, to enjoy these rural scenes — but not to indulge in your *solitude* one tender thought of this unknown stranger —this Edward.

And so, those two idle, little girls, Peggy and Patty, have not yet written to you! —but do forgive them, pray. —Poor things! —what a new scene of life and comfort must open to them, in the genteel family of that excellent woman Mrs. Bennet!

I rejoice

I rejoice extremely to hear they met with so kind a reception, and are in a fair way, through her means, of being most happily settled for life : — how lucky was it, my Emma, that this journey was put into execution. You know I respect and love their most worthy parents greatly : — there is something *sacred* to me in their father's sufferings — unrewarded merit ! — and sustaining the hardships that he does with so much fortitude. — How amiable, my dear, is *virtue* in its every extensive branch !

Adieu ! Excuse some *slippancies* in this letter, — but you know my

D 3

heart,

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heart, which is never more serious  
than when it assures her Emma,

I am most faithfully her's,

Lucy W.

---

LETTER XIII.

*From the same, to the same.*

West Grove,  
Northamptonshire.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAD just sent to the post a  
very long \* letter to you this  
morning — when I have heard a

\* The foregoing one.

piece

piece of intelligence, which absolutely petrifies me almost with amazement.—Good God! can it be?  
 —I *must* impart the strange—strange story to you, and yet how unwilling am I to pain your gentle heart! yet you *must* be made acquainted with the surprizing tale—that measures may be——But let me not anticipate:—I have shut myself up in my closet, to give you the fullest and earliest intelligence I possibly can of this astonishing matter:—  
 But to lead to it: I was sitting this morning, after breakfast, at my tambour in the parlour, alone,

D. 4.

when



when my uncle Charles\*, one of the worthiest of men (a clergyman in this neighbourhood, whom you have often heard me mention) came into the room to ask me (he has been here some days) if I would take a walk this fine morning. I told him I would attend him when I had finished a small bunch of rose-buds in my work; which whilst I was doing, he asked me, — “ Pray, “ Lucy, what is become of the poor “ worthy curate—in Cumberland—

\* This is the clergyman who happened to travel to London from Northampton, in the stage-coach, with the infamous captain, and the two poor sisters.

“ Summers

“Summers is, I think, his name?”

“—I have often heard you speak of

him, and I remember seeing him at

a visitation at Carlisle: is nothing

done for that good man yet? or

does he still continue to be a re-

proach to some *unfeeling* men in

power, who could, if they please,

provide for so much merit?”—

“The good man is still alive,”

(said I) “and still starving on his

little paltry income, with a sick,

weakly wife, and a great number

of children. Poor man!” (conti-

nued I, sighing) “but I hope Fortune

is now going soon to do something

for part of his family, however,

“which

“ which I rejoice to hear.”——

“ As how?” said my uncle.—

I then, my Emtha, in a few words, gave him an account of a lady in London having sent for the two eldest daughters, two beautiful girls, bred under their pious father's care, in every virtue; and that I imagined their being already gone to the lady would be attended with great advantages to them, and perhaps to the family.—My uncle was walking about the room all this time: —“ I am glad to hear this” (said he)—“ a long journey for two such young girls: — but who went with them to London?” —“ Why,”

——“ Why,” (said I). “ I really  
 “ think it rather adventurous;—  
 “ but they arrived safe, though they  
 “ went alone, at their relation’s  
 “ house, and so it is all very well.”

My uncle now sat down; and  
 after some little musing, as if he  
 was endeavouring to recollect some  
 particular circumstance — “ At  
 “ what time did these young sisters,  
 “ Lucy, go to London?” (said  
 he) — “ Good God! —— but no  
 “ —— that is impossible —— that can-  
 “ not be; —— and yet —— it must  
 “ —— but no —— Good heavens.  
 “ avert! —— God forbid!” ——  
 Whilst this worthy man was utter-  
 ing

ing these broken kind of unconnected *mutterings*, I flung down my needle, and looking earnestly on him, with eyes which I believe had *speech* in them — “ My dear sir,” (said I) “ for Heaven’s sake, if you “ know any thing of poor Peggy “ and Patty Summers, pray tell “ me : my Emma Harvey and they “ are ” — Here my uncle interrupted me — “ Patty and Peggy, “ did you say ? Nay, then it must “ be so ; — I am amazed ! ” — He shook his head — and again asked the time they went to London ; which luckily I remembered, even the very day : — “ Well ! ” (said the good

good man) “ I certainly went up  
 “ from Northampton, in the stage-  
 “ coach, with these young women ;  
 “ —but if they *were* those you  
 “ mention, I am exceedingly trou-  
 “ bled at what I have to tell you  
 “ about them.—Innocent and mo-  
 “ dest, indeed ! — good heavens !  
 “ but you shall — and pray be at-  
 “ tentive.” —— I was extremely  
 alarmed, as you may imagine ; and  
 begged him earnestly to inform me  
 all he knew, as you were greatly  
 interested in their welfare ; and that  
 I was also, on *their* account, as  
 well as for their parents. And now,  
 my Emma, prepare yourself, my  
 friend,

friend, for the wonderful things he told me, which I shall give you in his own words — (You will please to observe, the *day* he mentions was that *very identical* one in which these girls travelled to London.) “I arrived at the inn at Northampton,” (said my uncle) “and was shewn into a parlour, where I was told the rest of the passengers were, to go in the coach:— on my entering the room, I was extremely surprized to see two very young, and I think the most beautiful girls I ever beheld, sitting very composedly on each knee of an apparently gay young fellow,



“ fellow, who had his arm round  
 “ the waist of each :”—(Heavens !  
 Emma ! are you not almost *petrified*  
 at this ?)—“ he gave a kiss to each  
 “ of these very *willing* fair ones,  
 “ who received it with mutual  
 “ pleasure ; and, with a kind of  
 “ romping familiarity, he handed  
 “ them into the coach, into which  
 “ I likewise got, not a little asto-  
 “ nished at my company. I could  
 “ by no means reconcile their dress,  
 “ which was remarkably neat and  
 “ plain (in short, that of two simple  
 “ country maidens) with the free-  
 “ dom of their behaviour to this  
 “ young fellow :—his hands were  
 “ perpetually

“ perpetually in their's; a liberty  
 “ they permitted, as too trifling to  
 “ be restrained.—I looked earnest-  
 “ ly in the face of this man (who  
 “ apparently was of the most *liber-*  
 “ *tine* cast) and I observed he seem-  
 “ ed *shy* of my notice: his dress  
 “ was quite that of a man of fa-  
 “ shion.—I began asking him if he  
 “ had heard any news of the public  
 “ kind; but he seemed desirous to  
 “ avoid any, even common ques-  
 “ tions, I asked. I thought he seem-  
 “ ed *fearful* of some discovery of  
 “ himself, which still excited my  
 “ curiosity the more, and set my  
 “ head to work, where I could pos-  
 “ sibly

" sibly have before seen this rakish  
 " fellow : — at last I perfectly re-  
 " membered to have seen him dang-  
 " ling about in London last year,  
 " with that abandoned nobleman  
 " Lord Racket, and I recollected  
 " having seen him kicked out of a  
 " coffee-room near Temple-Bar, for  
 " a fraud he had committed about  
 " paying a draft—and called a vile  
 " pimp and rascal. His *name* I  
 " have quite forgot, but am cer-  
 " tain as to the *identity* of his *per-*  
 " *son*. — I at once naturally con-  
 " cluded this wretch had been  
 " down in the country, where he  
 " had picked up these two very  
 Vol. II. E " pretty

" pretty girls for his employer.—  
 " I looked upon them with the  
 " utmost compassion, and what  
 " surprised me was, though they  
 " both behaved to this forward  
 " spark with the most unblushing  
 " effrontery, yet, when I once or  
 " twice asked them some trifling  
 " question of the roads, &c. &c.  
 " their lovely cheeks were instantly  
 " covered with blushes. — Yes,  
 " Lucy," (continued my uncle)  
 " that kind of *ingenuous* blush which  
 " the innocent hand of bashfulness  
 " only could lay on a complexion  
 " un sullied : and there was (exclu-  
 " sive of their behaviour to the  
 " rakish

" rakish young man) an air me-  
 " thought of great simplicity and  
 " innocence in their manner. — I  
 " pitied them from my soul, as  
 " looking on them in the jaws of  
 " ruin, and was determined to  
 " watch them narrowly. When we  
 " stopped at the inn to dine, the  
 " gentleman again saluted them  
 " with great freedom, he called  
 " them his dear Patty and Peggy  
 " continually, which impressed their  
 " names on my memory : at dinner  
 " he called extravagantly for jel-  
 " lies, cheesecakes, and sweetmeats,  
 " to treat these girls, which still  
 " confirmed me in my first opi-  
 " nion.

" nion.—I asked if they came from  
 " Yorkshire, observing their dia-  
 " lect was of the *northern* kind."  
 —" No!" (said the eldest) " we  
 " are both, my sister and I, from  
 " *Cumberland*:" — (O, my Emma!  
 how my heart ached to hear this!)  
 —My uncle continued: " A vio-  
 " lent game of romps ensued after  
 " dinner: I left the room to them-  
 " selves, and enquired if the coach  
 " was ready; which being so, we  
 " set out for London, during which  
 " remainder of our journey I was  
 " indeed quite sick of my com-  
 " pany; though I heartily pitied  
 " these two poor girls. At length  
 " we

" we arrived at the great city : we  
 " all alighted at the inn , and whilst  
 " I was settling my fare with the  
 " coachman, I heard the libertine  
 " gentleman desiring the mistress of  
 " the house to take those two ladies  
 " into her care till he returned, in  
 " about two hours, as he said he  
 " should :—' For,' (said he) ' they  
 " are under my protection.'—Ah !  
 " poor girls ! thought I ; and my  
 " heart, Lucy," (continued the  
 " worthy man) " seemed to bleed for  
 " their parents, whoever they were.  
 " The mistress of the house took  
 " them into the bar ; and seemed,  
 " from her surveying the girls and



“ the gentleman, to think as I did.  
 “ —The next day I had occasion  
 “ to call at the inn, to enquire for  
 “ a gentleman there, when seeing  
 “ the mistress, I could not help  
 “ asking what became of the two  
 “ amiable young women left in her  
 “ hands the evening before,—‘ as  
 “ fellow travellers,’ (said I) ‘ I was  
 “ a little uneasy about their fate,—  
 “ two such young creatures alone !  
 “ —I cannot say I much liked the  
 “ gentleman who left them with  
 “ you :—pray did he return ?’——  
 “ ‘ You speak my very sentiments,  
 “ sir,’ (said the hostess, who is a  
 “ good kind of woman) ‘ my heart  
 “ ached,

" ached, for I am a mother of  
 " *daughters* myself, to see two such  
 " young girls under the care of  
 " that gentleman, who, if ever there  
 " was a rake, I am sure looks like  
 " a *fly* one :—he did return for them  
 " in about three hours, my hus-  
 " band did not like his looks, —he  
 " said he had brought a coach for  
 " the ladies, and he took one under  
 " each arm : they seemed indeed, I  
 " am sorry to say, very fond of him,  
 " and called him their dear George :  
 " my husband attended them to  
 " the coach, and had as much cu-  
 " riosity as myself to learn where  
 " the coachman was to drive, but

“ the gentleman only said to him,  
 “ — ‘ You have your orders ; ’ —  
 “ saying which, he clasped the la-  
 “ dies round the waist, and away  
 “ they drove : — ah ! poor girls !  
 “ ruined by this time, I doubt not.  
 “ — My husband cast his eye, he  
 “ says, on the coach door, and saw  
 “ the number of the coach, so that  
 “ one might easily find out the  
 “ coach and coachman.’ — ‘ Pray,’  
 “ (said I) ‘ madam, what is the  
 “ number of the coach ? ’ She told  
 “ me ; and, most luckily, as I was  
 “ that day walking through the  
 “ Strand, I saw a stand of coaches,  
 “ and amongst them the very num-  
 “ ber

" ber of the coach the landlady  
 " had mentioned. I beckoned the  
 " coachman; curiosity, and real  
 " compassion for the two poor  
 " country girls, impelled me to  
 " ask; ' Pray, honest friend, where  
 " did you set down, yesterday even-  
 " ing, the fare you took up from  
 " such an inn ?' — I found the fel-  
 " low impenetrably *close*, till I took  
 " out half a crown, and told him  
 " I wanted a coach myself to carry  
 " me to Dover-street : at the sight  
 " of the money the fellow's mus-  
 " cles of his face began to relax,  
 " and with a kind of half-grin he  
 " said, ' Your honour asked me  
 " where

“ where I carried that fare last  
 “ night?—I don’t always tell where  
 “ I carry a pretty girl to ; — but,  
 “ however, you seem an honourable  
 “ gentleman, and I will tell you :  
 “ —I carried them to’—— and  
 “ here, Lucy,” (continued my un-  
 cle) “ the man named the most  
 “ noted brothel in town.”——

“ O, for Heaven’s sake ! fir,” (in-  
 terrupted I) “ say it not——it can-  
 “ not, cannot be ! — O the poor  
 “ girls ! — but indeed it cannot  
 “ be !” —— “ Indeed,” (said my  
 uncle, very gravely) “ it can ; and  
 “ is an undoubted fact ! Two days  
 “ afterwards I mentioned this affair

“ to

" to a young man in the army, an  
 " acquaintance of mine: we walked  
 " by the house, which he under-  
 " took to shew me; I looked up at  
 " the windows, and there I saw both  
 " my poor country lasses standing  
 " and looking out: — they were at  
 " the house, I solemnly affirm; — the  
 " fatal consequences of their being  
 " in *such* a brothel, cannot be doubt-  
 " ed one moment. — And now,  
 " Lucy, what do you think?" —  
 " Think, sir! — O Heavens!" — I  
 burst into tears — for them — for  
 you, my poor Emma, who will be  
 almost distracted at the news: — but  
 the exemplary Mr. Summers! —  
 the

the tender mother ! — O, my dear, madness must be *their* portion ! — inevitable distraction. — Good God ! — astonishing ! — But what amazes me, is the forward boldness of these girls ! (upon my word, Emma, you must have been greatly *deceived* in them) had a long, artful train for their seduction been carried on, the wonder would not have been so great ; but to behave with such odious forwardness to this libertine, in the coach, is shameful — shameful indeed ! —

But what is to be done, my dear ? for something must be done : — who can break the shocking tale to the  
poor



poor parents?—Consider the *indisputable word* of such a man as my uncle,—a man who would not tell an untruth, if he might gain the world by it: what he says of this horrid matter is *fact*—certain fact;—it is no vague, idle conjecture.—My uncle and I have been consulting for two hours, what steps to take—but, as he wisely says, they must be lost, ruined now, for ever.—At a brothel!—good heavens!—Suppose you write—and yet I hardly know what to advise — but suppose you write to good Mrs. Bennet, in the first place, and tell her the horrid tale:—she is a lady of great prudence and good-

goodness, and let *her* write to her cousin Summers :—she may perhaps break it better to them, than you can have spirits to do : don't you think this will be the best method ? —for my part, I stand aghast !—Who can this wretch be, with whom my uncle says these *sad girls* (for indeed, indeed, Emma, they must be *very sad girls*)—seemed so extremely intimate, and even fond ?—to permit a passenger in the coach, a stranger, to kiss them !—to romp with them !—shocking !—Ah, my poor friend, you have been most egregiously mistaken in these girls, take my word for it. —My stars !—indeed, I have been

as much deceived as yourself—what sweet innocence, what a modest simplicity appeared in their every word and action! You may remember I was perfectly charmed with their whole behaviour, when I saw them last year at your house;—and now at once to throw themselves on the first \* young fellow they met, is astonishing!—I own I am exceedingly displeased with them.—And how artful have they been, to write such a letter to their poor, deceived, deat-

\* The reader cannot think Miss Waller too harsh in her censure of the unhappy sisters, as she could not possibly know how cruelly they had been deceived, in believing they had found a brother.

ing

ing parents—I wonder not, indeed, that they have not written to you,—vile girls! my dear.—Well, but you must write, I think, to good Mrs. Bennet—for the sake of the poor parents you must write:—as to the girls, as they could behave in the manner my uncle says they did, (whose authority is unquestionable) to a stranger in a stage-coach—and afterwards put themselves under his protection in the manner they did—and be seen publicly standing, and quietly so, at a window, in the most noted, infamous brothel in London—may make one, indeed, set them down for *lost*, as far as there can be *perdition*.

Adieu,

Adieu, my sweet friend;—you will be quite astonished, and equally grieved, at this miserable intelligence.—Poor Mrs. Harvey will weep for their tender mother!—consult with your's, my dear, what is best to be done.—The post is this instant setting out, therefore I can only add, that I am,

most faithfully, (

your's ever,

*Lucy Waller.*

(The reader will easily conceive, what the heart of Miss Harvey must suffer, on receiving the above amazing tidings!—she fainted in her mother's

ther's arms.—For some days she was unable to come to any resolution.—Sometimes Mrs. Harvey was for going to Ashdale, to communicate the unhappy tidings:—at other times poor Miss Harvey was determined to write to Mrs. Bennet; this she at last resolved on; and sat down with a heavy heart, to write the following letter.)

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#### LETTER XIV.

*Miss Harvey to Mrs. Bennet.*

MADAM, Moss-hill, Cumberland.

**T**HE unhappy cause of my addressing a lady, to whom I have not the

the pleasure of being known, will, I hope, sufficiently *excuse* the great liberty of my writing.—[Here Miss Harvey gives an account of her connexion with the family of the worthy Mr. Summers, and then proceeds to inform her of the interesting tale concerning her unfortunate friends, in nearly the same words as given by the clergyman; therefore we shall not again repeat it—she then continues]—O madam! these dear girls, (for so, blameable as their conduct appears, I must yet call them) have been connected with me in the most tender friendship from our earliest years, even before we knew the



meaning of that sacred tie: — our affection for each other grew with our years, my Peggy and Patty, *made my happiness*, whilst their industry, their filial piety, their humility, and sweetness of manners, I endeavoured to make my *pattern*: — judge then, good madam, of my grief, my amazement, to hear of this astonishing fall of these, till now, most virtuous, indeed exemplary young women! — That they should at once give themselves up, in the manner I have related to you, a prey to infamy, should seem an absolute impossibility, was it not affirmed by  
the

the most worthy gentleman above-mentioned. 'Could' there be, think you, madam, a chance of recovering them?—Ah, no!—I fear they are lost—lost for ever!—To your wisdom, madam, I leave the discovery of this miserable affair:—to their excellent parents:—tho' I fear they will hardly survive it; yet it must be known to them; and surely the sooner the better.—Ah! poor, unhappy girls!—de-luded and wretched;—my heart bleeds for them. In vain do I try to palliate their *strange* behaviour to the gentleman in the coach:—but, alas! no excuse can be found

for such levity:—and their putting themselves under his protection, when they arrived at London, is astonishing!—their writing from your house, and of the reception you gave them, when the worthy clergyman asserts he saw them at the window of an infamous brothel, is an enigma, as amazing as all the rest.

My mother, madam, presents her respectful compliments; and believes she was, in former days, a school-fellow of your's at B——.

Pray pardon this unconnected letter, or more properly the effusions of my present distressed heart.—If  
my

my Peggy and Patty are lost for ever, never more can happiness be known to,

Madam,

your most obedient,

humble servant,

*Emma Harvey.*

P. S. You will have the goodness, I doubt not, to write as soon as possible.

(The worthy Mrs. Bennet received the preceding letter with great amazement; nor was her *surprise* less than her real *concern*.—By the next post she returned the following letter to Miss Harvey.)

F 4

L E T.

LETTER XV.

*Mrs. Bennet to Miss Harvey,*

London.

MY GOOD YOUNG LADY;

I AM favoured with your's; the contents of which give me equal grief and amazement. I assure you most *truly*; I have neither *seen* nor *heard* a single syllable of my cousins Peggy and Patty Summers.—Surely it ~~could~~ not be your amiable friends whom this worthy clergyman met with — and yet his account is so very particular; his veracity, you say, so unquestionable. — I much, indeed,

indeed, wondered I did not hear from Alldale, as these poor girls were not arrived; and should have written again to have *pressed* their visit, but, unfortunately, a kind of putrid sore-throat, which broke out in my family, of the malignant kind, of which fatal distemper I lost two of my servants, prevented my writing:—and indeed, to say the truth, I almost wished my young cousins might have deferred their journey for a few weeks longer, lest the smallest infection might have remained:—my own girls I have sent into the country on this account.—Be assured, dear madam, Mr. Bennet and

and I will use our utmost endeavours to find these unfortunate young women :—but after you tell me, they have been seen at a window at mother H-----'s—I fear—I much fear, they will be *irrecoverable*:—you may depend on it, such fine young creatures as you describe them to be, will (for the present at least) be kept by the above infamous woman, and her vile employers.—Good God! what shall we say!—I have been weeping over your very affecting letter. — My *poor* cousin Summers!—this sad stroke must be fatal!—for oh, I fear we shall never be able to *trace* these imprudent girls ;—



girls, — *imprudent*, I must repeat, in the wrong step they *first* took, in setting out (as you say) from Carlisle alone.

Mr. Bennet and I have been consulting what measures to take, and we both judge it will be best to make all possible enquiry after them, (though, indeed, I fear to very little purpose) before I write to my poor kinsman. — Their amazing art, and *effrontery* I may add, to write an account to their parents, that they were safely arrived at my house, and the reception, &c. we had given them, is most wonderful! — it seems such a master-piece of *contrivance*,  
that

that one should imagine two such young inexperienced creatures could not be guilty of.—— I am perfectly lost in a labyrinth: — but however, after their *behaviour* that you mention, and the subsequent particulars of their so *willingly* going from the inn with a young rakish-looking man, I think one can wonder at nothing. The more I consider of this wretched affair, the greater is every moment my perplexity. — If I gain any new lights, you may depend on hearing from me again: — but at all events, when I have made an enquiry concerning (I fear) these *bad girls*, I shall set about the heart-breaking

breaking task of writing to their  
poor parents.

I am (my good young lady, with  
my respectful compliments to Mrs.  
Harvey)

Your obedient, but

at present greatly

distressed servant,

*Sarah Bennet.*

---

**THE** indefatigable pains the  
above lady, her husband, and friends,  
took for some weeks, in endeavour-  
ing to discover the two unfortunate  
sisters, as it retarded the matter be-  
fore their parents were written to,

was

was very unlucky; for though the motive was *kind* (in hopes they might have been *recoverable*) yet, alas! these wretched victims were by this time, and had been so some weeks, in a state nearly bordering on distraction: — on the return of their mental faculties from the power of the accursed drugs which had been administered—in moments of intervals from the phrenzy of the fever under which these poor suffering angels (for angels they were in their *intention*) were both labouring, — they were fully sensible of the horrid outrage and cruelty they had both sustained, and whilst their

Emma,

Emma, Miss Waller, Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, &c. were (as they thought) justly condemning them, as having added to the list of infamous and abandoned young creatures, they were in a situation which would have drawn, as Milton says,

*"Iron tears from even Pluto's cheek."*—

Whilst these unfortunate victims were in the most pitiable state the feeling heart can imagine, they were removed privately, at midnight, lest their cries should alarm the neighbourhood, to a private lodging-house, occupied by a cast-off mistress of Lord Racket (a creature entirely

tirely at his devotion) and whom he had put into this house (which was a handsome one) for the infamous purpose of receiving young creatures (marked for his prey) on their first being, as he called it, broke into his service.

Mean time Mr. and Mrs. Benner were indefatigable in their enquiries: — the above worthy gentleman, on hearing from his wife the poor girls had been seen at Mother H----'s, went himself to the house, and asking to speak with her, desired she would inform him if she ever had seen two young ladies of Cumberland, of the name of  
Peggy

Peggy and Patty Summers. She most solemnly averred, " by all that was sacred, and as she had a soul she hoped would be saved, she never knew or heard of the persons he enquired for."—After other fruitless enquiries, Mr. and Mrs. Bennet at length concluded our poor sisters were totally lost, that they had renounced by this time all sense of shame, and were either gone into *keeping*, or thrown themselves, like other miserable prostitutes, in the casual way of every abandoned libertine they met.

Alas! how far otherwise was the case!—And here let me observe, that,



let *appearances* be what they will, we should never make a *decisive* judgment till every *shadow* of *conjecture* is warranted by absolute *certainly*.

During the above period of time, the infamous Captain Jackall concluded (as naturally he might) that the poor deluded Mr. Summers would write in answer to the artful letter he had vilely forged to Ashdale from these wretched girls (as before-mentioned,) he therefore thought it most expedient, to serve his vile purposes, to intercept two letters, at the General Post-office, from their *then happy*, deceived parents, and had the additional villainy

lany to counterfeit two from the poor girls (which he did unsuspected, being a master of forging *hand-writing*, and Peggy's he could easily imitate, having her letter to her parents, which he had before stopped, in his possession.) These epistles from daughters so inexpressibly dear, and written in the most happy state, as they supposed, from Mrs. Bonnet's, created much happiness at Ashdale, and lulled the worthy parents naturally into the most satisfied state imaginable. The contents were imparted to Miss Harvey, who having heard of the supposed *loss* of her once dear friends, was lost in

the utmost amazement at the art and vile deceit (as she imagined) of the writers of these letters — thus to impose on their poor unsuspecting parents ! — “ But, good God !” (she exclaimed to herself) “ this  
 “ vile art of theirs, this wicked de-  
 “ ceit, is the natural consequence  
 “ of their shocking *fall* from vir-  
 “ tue. — When once a woman has  
 “ fell into this shame and infamy,  
 “ adieu to all regard, to every  
 “ thing that is praise-worthy : —  
 “ every vicious habit will now be  
 “ soon, or is already contracted : —  
 “ *virtue* (in this sense of the word)  
 “ is to our sex the *boundary* of every

"goodness:—ah! my poor Peggy,  
 "my Patty! ye are lost, lost for  
 "ever."-----Then would this sweet,  
 amiable girl weep by the hour in  
 the silent midnight for her lost  
 friends: — "they *once* were inno-  
 "cent," — (would she continually  
 repeat) "but, good God! how ra-  
 "pid has been their swift progress  
 "from virtue to vice!"—

Miss Harvey did not think it pro-  
 per to inform Mr. and Mrs. Sum-  
 mers of what she had heard, and  
 indeed *believed*, — the dreadful dis-  
 covery Mrs. Bennet had undertook  
 to make, — and though our poor  
 Emma endured infinite concern on

this occasion, yet still she thought it wiser (as did her mother) to wait for Mrs. Bennet's final enquiries and discovery, before they revealed the miserable event.

Miss Harvey may possibly incur *blame* in this particular; but her distress in this respect was critical—it was delicate:—there was, she thought, a *bare possibility* her friends might be not so very culpable as they now appeared, and whilst there was the least *loop-hole*, or even shadow of their being recoverable, she thought it most prudent, and indeed most kind, to be silent:—but, alas! by this mistaken reason-  
ing

ing of her's (though meant for the best) the delay still ~~lung~~ <sup>lung</sup> our poor unfortunates into the *absolute* ruin which awaited them. — But let us now return to these miserable sisters. — —

They were now, as before mentioned, under the roof of a very specious and artful woman, she passed in her neighbourhood (which was a genteel part of the town) for a lady of a pretty fortune, whose husband was gone for a few years to Madras, in a lucrative post—and went by the name of Williams.— Our poor girls were lodged in a very handsome apartment, where

they had not as yet seen, since their removal there, their vile undoer (being both extremely ill), neither had their infamous *feigned* brother made his appearance: — they still imagined he *was* their brother, but that the villain who had ruined their innocence, though brought by him, as a particular friend, to Mrs. Bennet's (as they still thought the wicked mother H----- to be) yet had, unknown to him, taken advantage to commit the shocking outrage. —

An angel might have stopped his radiant course, though bent on an errand of mercy, to have shed a pitying



pitying tear on the distress of these wretched sisters, when, just able (their fever and delirium giving way at length to medicine) to leave their beds, they sat weeping on each other's bosom. — "Where shall we go? — or what shall we do?" (said Peggy.) "Do you remember, my Patty, who brought us into this fine room?" — "Mrs. Williams says," (returned her sister) "our brother George ordered us to be brought here; and that he is very angry with our cousin Bennet for suffering such doings in her house — for indeed,

" deed, Peggy, she must<sup>\*</sup>; she must  
 " have known how we have been  
 " treated.—How kind of our bro-  
 " ther to lodge us with this good  
 " lady!—Don't you like her, Peg-  
 " gy?" (said the poor, deceived in-  
 " nocent) — " Yes! *indeed*, I do " —  
 (returned the other) — " she appears  
 " kind and good. — Our poor pa-

\* The belief these poor girls enter-  
 tained of their having been ill treated in  
 the house of their relation (for they had  
 not the least idea of a Mother H-----)  
 sufficiently answers a question the critical  
 reader might be led here to ask, namely,  
 Why did they not write, if able to hold a  
 pen, to the real Mrs. Bennet? the ques-  
 tion is already answered, by their unfortu-  
 nate belief.

" rents

"rents (but there distraction lies)

"will never outlive our calamity,

"do you think they will, my poor

"Party?" — In such kind of moving dialogues did these miserable girls spend their hours when Mrs. Williams was not with them, which, however, she was as much as possible, to *ingratiate* herself into their confidence.

This bad woman foresaw, from the youth and extreme beauty of these lovely girls, that they would most probably deeply engage lord Racket, on some of his set, and exerted every art to bring them to her lure. She was a young woman of a  
pleasing

pleasing countenance, which she could *vary* just as occasion served her turn to do. This artful wretch, by pitying — by nursing these wretched girls — by administering every little nourishment herself in their illness: — by weeping over them—and by an hundred nameless assidukies and attentions, wonderfully wrought on the *grateful* and tender hearts of our poor victims. —Girls of that early age are extremely susceptible of partialities: unfortunately, they esteemed, nay even, in a few weeks, began to have an affection for this woman. —Neither can it be wondered at.

—To

—To whom could they turn their desolate hearts for pity?—to whom could they look up for aid?—

It has been said, and I fear is too often true, that a woman is frequently *ruined by a woman*: — however, be that fact, or not, most certain it is, that our poor girls might never in *the end* have been lost to utter shame and infamy, had they not known, and been instigated thereto by Mrs. Williams. This cunning wretch did *not* affect to be a stranger to the cruel outrage they had received: — she said, their dear brother (who was then gone a journey into the country) would

would *revenge* it : — she wept over them ; whilst the poor innocents, *then as pure in intention as angels*, hid their languid faces in her perfidious bosom : — “ How good you are, dear Mrs. Williams ! — how shall we ever return this load of obligation ! ” — These, and such-like effusions of their grateful hearts, were continually poured forth, from the yet *un-polluted* lips of the poor devoted sisters.

They even looked up to Mrs. Williams, as to a lady of a very genteel rank in life, (every thing about her indicated as much ; her dress and manners were elegant.) Our  
poor

poor unfortunates, (such was their simplicity and humility) were often *burt*, that so genteel a lady should even attend them, in many little articles relative to their recovery:—

“ Dear madam,” (sometimes they would say) “ do not give yourself all

“ this trouble:—we are only *poor*

“ *girls*— poor *country* girls; and

“ had we health, would wait *on* you,

“ instead of your kind care, and

“ troubling yourself thus on our

“ account.”—“ What— what do

“ you *advise* us to do?” (said the

lovely, languid Peggy, when so far

recovered as to be able to rise every

day from her bed, and her fever

had



had subsided) “ what, my dear, *good*  
 “ Mrs. Williams, do you advise us  
 “ to do?—O my beloved parents!”  
 (cried she, wringing her hands, and  
 bursting into tears)—“ I cannot,—  
 “ indeed I cannot communicate the  
 “ sad tidings of our—our”—*ruin*—  
 she would have said, but the fatal  
 word was lost in sobbings. —Mrs.  
 Williams, on being asked *advice*,  
 was quite transported; it being the  
 very *point* she wanted to gain:—her  
 work, she thought, was now half  
 done; as she intended to manage her  
*advice* so very artfully, it could not  
 fail of being not only taken kindly,  
 but put in practice. She now, hear-  
 ing

ing poor Peggy ask her opinion, took out her pocket-handkerchief, and feign'd to join tears with our lovely sufferer:—"You ask my *ad-*  
*" vice*, my dear Miss Summers," said she; "alas! what can I give?"  
 "As to writing to \* your parents,"  
 "what can you say?—can you tell

\* The critical reader may perhaps wonder, these unhappy young women did not wish to write likewise to their old friend Miss Harvey: but what could they tell her?—minds so *ingenuous* as theirs, (had they written) could no way reconcile, with the unbounded confidence and sincerity of such friends, the *concealing* what had so recently happened:—on the other hand, to reveal the horrid tale, would have been just the same, in its consequences, as acquainting their parents with it—they therefore deferred writing for some short time.

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“ them the horrid tale?——I’ll tell  
 “ you what I think will be best :—  
 “ Suppose *I* wrote a line, to say, you  
 “ are both well, and that you will  
 “ both write soon; that I am a very  
 “ particular friend of your brother’s,  
 “ at least that my husband is so,  
 “ having met abroad; and that you  
 “ are both now at my house.”—  
 “ But will it be TRUE,” said the  
 sweetly *ingenuous* girls, “ to say,  
 “ we are *well*?”—“ If you tell them  
 “ otherwise, you will alarm them;  
 “ —besides, where is the deception  
 “ in this? you are both, I bless  
 “ Heaven, and my cares shall not be  
 “ wanting”—(“You are *all goodness*,  
 “ madam,” interrupted Patty). —  
 “ but

“ but you both are,” (this wicked woman continued) “ in a most fair way of recovery ; a few airings, I hope, in Hyde Park, will complete your cure.—Well ! I will write then, my dear girls ? ”

“ Do as you please, *dear* madam,” (said Peggy)—“but—but don’t you think my poor father *ought* to be told of his cousin Bennet’s treachery to us ? ”

“ Why no, my dear,” (said Mrs. Williams) “ I really think not:—*we* are not quite sure, you know, that *she* knew of the villany of the wretch who has behaved in this shameful manner ; — Mrs. Bennet may, or may not, be in-

“ nocent : — the dreadful affair is  
 “ past, and must be buried in obli-  
 “ vion.—This I know, that were  
 “ I you, I never more would *see*, or  
 “ *have* the smallest connexion with  
 “ any of the *Bennet family* : a wo-  
 “ man cannot be too *delicate* with  
 “ whom she associates in this great  
 “ wicked town.—Mercy on me !—  
 “ I shudder to think of so much  
 “ wickedness, as this cousin of  
 “ your’s (if privy to this bad affair)  
 “ has been guilty of !—but I hope  
 “ you never more will take any  
 “ notice of her.”—“ *That* you may  
 “ depend on,” said Peggy.—Mrs.  
 Williams having gained two mate-  
 rial points, which were, to prevent  
 any

any farther connexion with the Bennet family, (for very obvious reasons) and also to prevent our poor unfortunates from acquainting their parents they were ill, (as in that case the father, thro' excess of tenderness, might have taken a journey to see them) now called for pens and paper, and wrote a letter to Mr. Summers:—such an one as, for the present, might very well satisfy him that they were in a very comfortable situation, with a friend of their brother's.—This letter she read to our poor innocents, who said, they were greatly *obliged* to her for her *goodness* in taking so much

H 3                      trouble :

trouble:—"But, dear madam," said Peggy, "you say we are both *well*, "*indeed* that is *not true*."—"What a "little scrupulous girl you are," (returned Mrs. Williams) "would "you give *pain* to such tender "parents?"—"Not for the world," (said Patty, sighing)—"but I think "we are well enough to hold a pen, "to add a postscript."—"Indeed "*not*," (said the artful woman) "you will make your heads ach—" "I am your *nurse*, you know, and "have too great a regard for you, "to suffer you to hurt *yourselves*." —The deceived sisters again called her "*all goodness*."—The letter was



now sealed and directed; when Mrs. Williams rose, and said, she would carry it herself to the servant, with a particular charge to be careful to put it in the post; when walking very composedly into the parlour, she flung the letter into the *fire*.

Lord Racket frequently called in secret on Mrs. Williams, to enquire how *she went on*; she replied, "As heart can wish:—O my lord, never were two such angels! and I doubt not, in one poor fortnight, with a *little* of my *advice*, they will be all your *own*, on your lordship's *terms*;—as tender and kind as man can wish, I

"doubt not:—no need, I fancy,  
 "for *potions* again."—His lordship  
 was ready to hug the infamous wo-  
 man, calling her "his good angel,"  
 "his incomparable Kitty," and  
 said he should leave all to her  
*wife* management.

The poor sisters now began gra-  
 dually to get better;—a chariot  
 (which Mrs. Williams said belong-  
 ed to a brother of her's) took them  
 out with her, once or twice, an air-  
 ing: this little amusement, with the  
 benefit of the air, contributed great-  
 ly to the re-establishment of their  
 health. — The artful woman now  
 applied herself, with unremitting  
 assiduity,

assiduity, to the *corruption* of the *hearts* of these poor,—as yet *innocent* creatures, with respect to their *will*. The wretch read to them plays of the most rapturous kind, novels of a dangerous tendency, and poems of the most amorous nature.—This kind of amusement, she was pretty certain, would do her business:—young girls of the age of our Peggy and Patty, too naturally listen with avidity to *love-stories*, as they are called: besides, these kind of books had all the charms of *novelty* likewise to recommend them, as they had never an opportunity of seeing any book in  
their

their father's little study but books of piety. Sometimes this wicked woman would throw out an exclamation of this kind : — " Good God ! Peggy, how handsome you look to-day ! — if I was a man I should run distracted for so much beauty ! — and you, my pretty little Patty, look like an angel ! " tapping her glowing cheek — which blushed a deeper dye at this kind of discourse. — Mrs. Williams soon found, that female vanity is an inhabitant of every *female* bosom, whether the *woman* be bred in the wilds of Cumberland, or the precincts of the metropolis. — " Dear  
" Mrs.

" Mrs. Williams, *how you talk!*" — was all that was said (accompanied by a blush) from our simple country girls. They now began to say, they thought themselves well enough to get a livelihood by their *needle*, that they might no longer be a burthen to their brother George, or to his friend (for so they believed Mrs. Williams to be) and sometimes they were for returning to Cumberland. — Their vile landlady heard them with great patience, and calmly replied — " As to getting a livelihood by your needle, it is a farce to talk of it : — people who do that, have acquired a facility

"cility of doing it from their  
 "early days, have served an ap-  
 "prenticeship to milliners, &c. —  
 "my dear girls, you would both  
 "be starved at such employment,  
 "take my word for it, in one fort-  
 "night." — "We can work very  
 "neatly," (cried the Innocent Patty)  
 — "That may be," (returned Mrs.  
 Williams) "but not with the re-  
 "quisite quickness for the shops, I  
 "am convinced:—drop therefore,  
 "my good young women, all such  
 "visionary schemes as getting a live-  
 "lihood by your needle:—many a  
 "young creature is reduced, in this  
 "great city, to shame in the streets;  
 "that

" that depended on her *needle* for  
 " support." — " *Indeed!*" (said  
 Peggy) " I thought *industry* al-  
 " ways met with its reward." —  
 Mrs. Williams smiled at her *Cum-*  
*berland simplicity*, as she called it:  
 — " But," (continued she) " how  
 " could so strange a thought enter  
 " your heads as returning again to  
 " your parents? — You have told  
 " me they are already overwhelmed  
 " with a large family of children;  
 " — you would not, I am con-  
 " vinced, add to that burthen: — be-  
 " sides," (added the wicked wo-  
 man, pretending to hide a blush  
 with her pocket handkerchief) —  
 " besides,



" besides, how know you — I  
 " cannot speak it — my delicacy is  
 " hurt, — but — but how know you  
 " but you may be *pregnant* by the  
 " wretch who seduced you ?" —

This dreadful supposition flung the  
 poor girls into tears, and they even  
 shuddered with the apprehension.

—" Nay," (continued she) " I  
 " know not it is so ; — but if it  
 " should — would you carry in-  
 " famy down to your poor pa-  
 " rents ? — would you drive them  
 " quite distracted ?" — " O, for  
 " heaven's sake name it not, *good*  
 " Mrs. Williams ! — no — no, we  
 " will

" will not go : — we will in all  
" things do as you think *best*."

A letter now arrived from their feigned brother, to say he was just arrived in town from Portsmouth, where he said he had been on a troublesome business with a captain of an Indiaman ; but that he would fly on the wings of love to see his dear sisters that evening.— The languid eyes of our lovely girls sparkled with pleasure, at the notice of this unexpected visit from their brother.—He arrived at Mrs. Williams's :—they embraced him with the most heart-felt joy, and even transport :

transport: — they received his ardent kiss with the frankness of affectionate sisters; they then burst into tears. — And what a heart of petrified stone must this villain have, who so basely assumed the name of *brother*, to hear, unmoved, these lovely girls, with streaming eyes, exclaim — “ You see us, my  
 “ dear George, but, alas! you see us  
 “ not now *innocent* — as when you  
 “ carried us to our *relation's* house:  
 “ —O, my brother, what have we  
 “ suffered!” — They now endeavoured to hide their blushing faces in his bosom. — The hardened villain here execrated the shocking  
 wretch

wretch who had perpetrated the outrage on their innocence, and, throwing himself into a violent rage, (a perfect master of every species of art!) vowed eternal revenge on the villain :—"Nay," (said he) "I have  
 " been already pursuing him to al-  
 " most every sea-port in England,  
 " but the rascal has escaped my  
 " vengeance! yet, by all the pow-  
 " ers of heaven and earth I swear,  
 " I will have satisfaction. — Mrs.  
 " Bennet, my sisters, had told me  
 " the horrid tale, soon after the sad  
 " affair happened; on which I im-  
 " mediately set out to pursue the  
 " villain, with my passion of rage  
 VOL. II.            I            " nearly

“ nearly worked to madness, but  
 “ he left London some hours be-  
 “ fore me :—that confounded wo-  
 “ man, Mrs. Bennet, with all her  
 “ civility, I think might have saved  
 “ you ; she must have heard your  
 “ distress.” He now traversed the  
 dining-room in a mighty passion at  
 this villany of the sea-captain, (as  
 he called their undoer) vowing ven-  
 geance, &c.—This *rant* had quite the  
 desired effect ; our poor girls called  
 him their “ good angel — their in-  
 “ comparable brother :” — whilst  
 the vile hypocrite, Mrs. Williams,  
 said she perfectly adored him for the  
 noble *warmth* he shewed on this  
 occasion.

occasion. — “ I suppose,” (said the infamous wretch) “ you cannot,  
 “ my dear sisters, recollect the face,  
 “ the features, of the diabolical  
 “ wretch :”— (this \* circumstance  
 he wished to know for obvious rea-  
 sons)

\* This wretch was obliged to manage his plot with great *art*, as every guilty one must be managed : he had been sometimes fearful that on Lord Racket’s being now soon to be introduced to them, they might in him recollect the ship captain : —but his *disguise*, when he assumed that character, was so impossible to be discovered — his fears were unnecessary. He had blacked his eye-brows ; had a patch on one eye ; and likewise coloured his face with a kind of *yellow* hue, the effect, he said, of having been many voyages to the East-Indies, and long living there.—

sons) — “ O no — no ” — (said the sweetly-blushing Peggy) — “ darkness, and next distraction, was “ our portion : — but if you remember, brother, you introduced him “ to us as a captain of a ship, and “ he drank tea with us : we then “ indeed saw his person, but I did “ not observe him much ; I only “ remember he was a *frightful*, “ *swarthy*, black old man.” —

Good ! — (thought the vile, pretended brother) this is all right ; —

His dress too on the fatal night was equally disguising as his face ; having a short, cropped, little black wig, and a black stock round his neck ; and affected to be at least twenty years older than he was, and quite a downright sea-faring tar.

I defy



I defy even Satan himself *now* to discover the glorious plot! (Besides, Lord Racket was a fair man, remarkably handsome, and a very fine figure in person.) — “ But  
 “ come,” (said he) “ let us try to  
 “ bury in oblivion what is past :—  
 “ I mean *your* feeling sense of it,  
 “ my dear creatures ; — as to *my*  
 “ *own* particular revenge — it is  
 “ *deep—deep* ;—and I shall not rest  
 “ till I have plunged my dagger in  
 “ his perfidious breast.—But come,  
 “ my good girls, — I have such  
 “ delightful news to communicate,  
 “ that for the present must make  
 “ us at least forget *our* late calami-

“ tles. — I have met with *such a*  
 “ *friend!*—our dear father is made  
 “ for ever ! — O, my dear sisters !  
 “ such an angel on earth have I  
 “ met with !” — This preface ex-  
 cited all the curiosity of our poor de-  
 lighted girls, to hear their *father* had  
 obtained some advantage, though  
 they knew not what.—“ Tell—tell  
 “ us, my dear George,” (said they,  
 their fine eyes sparkling with glad  
 surprize) “ what—what is this joy-  
 “ ful news ?”——

“ *Good Mrs. Williams,*” (the arch  
 deceiver replied) “ you are primari-  
 ly the cause of the happy event:  
 —you know I brought over from  
 abroad,

abroad, a valuable packet from your most worthy husband, with a strict injunction to deliver it, with my own hands, to the noble and worthy Lord Racket. — In my late excursion, I took his lordship's country seat in my route : — I met with a most genteel reception in the first place; such politeness, such hospitality united ! — On hearing my name (continued the wretch) was Summers, " Pray, sir, (said his lordship) are you acquainted with any family in the north—in Cumberland, of that name ? — My father, (continued he) on his

death-bed, recommended to my care a worthy old clergyman, whom he said he remembered at college, and to whom he desired I would, in remembrance of some very particular old friendship betwixt them in former days, present with the very valuable living of L----- in Yorkshire, on its becoming vacant; and till it was, (if I had an opportunity) to be kind to the worthy man and his family, if he had one:—but I have never been able to learn any tidings of this clergyman, Mr. Summers.”——“ Good Heavens ! (cried I, in a transport of

of

of joy) my lord, he is my father:  
— the worthiest, best of men; —  
he is starving, with the resolution  
of a martyr, and the piety of a  
saint, on barely thirty pounds a  
year, with a large — very large  
family of children, and my dear  
mother always in an ill state of  
health.”——“ My stars ! ” (inter-  
rupted his lordship) “ how singu-  
larly fortunate is this ! — poor,  
good man : — but I will reward  
his patient merit.” —— “ O the  
heavenly man ! ” (cried the de-  
ceived, *listening* girls, whilst tears of  
grateful joy ran down their cheeks)

—"but go on—*dear, dear George,*  
with this *blessed account!*"—

"I then proceeded to give this most generous nobleman a full and particular account of the sufferings, the patience, in short, of the hundred virtues, of that best of men and fathers;—of my absence in Bengal;—and, in short, of every particular circumstance relative to our family; such was his lordship's goodness and condescension to enquire minutely into the state of it: But O my sisters!—O Mrs. Williams!—how was I impressed, nay, absolutely overwhelmed with gratitude,

tude, when his lordship (we were in his study) turned round, and, opening a drawer in an escrutore, took out a bank bill of five hundred pounds value, and desired I would instantly remit it to my father, as he said the incumbent on the living of L----- was still living!" —" O heavens," (cried the poor sisters) " what a vast sum of money ! " " O what an angel of a man is *this* " *lord Racket !* "—" I was perfectly astonished at the *greatness* of this nobleman's mind," (said the infamous man) " it indeed beggars all description.—But to be brief, his lordship having perfectly oppressed  
me



me with civilities of every kind, brought me to town in his chariot and fix :—and I having accidentally, in some common discourse on the road, happened to say I had two sisters in town — what will you think, my dear girls, of the astonishing goodness and humility of this heavenly man !—(not the least spark of pride belonging to him)— what will you think, I repeat, when I tell you his lordship will call to see you both, as the daughters of the good man my father ?—Yes, Mrs. Williams, he will drink tea here to-morrow evening ; and—“ What,” (interrupted Peggy and Patty).

— what

“ what an angel upon earth is this  
 “ gentleman!—but indeed, brother,  
 “ we know not how to behave be-  
 “ fore a *lord*; we shall be *so ashamed*  
 “ *ed* before such a great person!—  
 “ But have you sent,” (said the  
 sweet, considerate Peggy)—“ have  
 “ you *sent* the noble present of the  
 “ bank bill down to our poor fa-  
 “ ther?”—“ By the very next post  
 “ I did,” replied the arch fiend.—

A gush of tears relieved the af-  
 fectionate hearts of our grateful,  
 dutiful girls, at this moment:—  
 what precious tears! the sacred  
 drops of filial piety!—“O, my be-  
 “ loved father,” (cried they) “ now  
 “ will

“ will you be made happy for life;  
 “ now ease and comfort, at last, will  
 “ be your lot ! ”

Ah, poor deluded innocents!—my heart bleeds, for simplicity abused.

Mrs. Williams now said, “ she rejoiced to have an opportunity, in person, of thanking his lordship for his generous care of her dear husband’s fortune ; and should get all things ready for so great an *honour* as this visit ; and that tea and coffee should be ready at six.”

Our poor girls now feared their dress was not handsome enough to appear in, before *a lord*. —“ As to that matter,” (said the vile pimp)

“ make

“ make yourselves, my dear sisters;  
 “ quite easy ; his lordship is above  
 “ all form and ceremony ; as to  
 “ dress, these little round-ear’d caps,  
 “ and the red top-knot, is quite  
 “ sufficient.”

At length our lovely unfortunates, drest by the hand of neat simplicity—their innocent bosoms glowing with ardent gratitude for the expected noble visiter, who had acted, as they thought (ah, poor deluded girls !) so generously to their father—were now with Mrs. Williams in her drawing-room, expecting his arrival every moment ; when at six o’clock, a thundering rap at the

the door, and a servant entering, announced lord Racket: who in an instant appeared, drest with all the elegance and finery of a birth-night beau.—The figure of this vile man (as has been before said) was fine, his face handsome:—this, with the extreme advantages of dress, rendered him at that moment, perhaps, one of the most pleasing objects in the world;—and as *dangerous* as *agreeable*. He entered the room with a smile of the most engaging humility;—we may here say, with Shakespear,

“Heavens! that a man should *smile*, and

“*smile*,

“Yet be a villain.”

Whilst

Whilst the sweet Peggy and her amiable sister were covered with blushes, and almost ready to sink into the earth, at the conscious idea that they were then in the presence of a *great lord*:—they sat down on the *corner* of their chairs, and were ready to shrink into themselves. Novices as they were in the gay world, they had never seen any form that could attract such admiration as lord Racket's:—they were even overwhelmed with their gratitude besides, as this fine man was the noble friend that had relieved their parents' wants.

Perhaps a more artful plan of seduction was never laid than this:—

for the imagined obligations these poor devoted victims fancied they were under to this infamous man, touched their grateful hearts in the tenderest manner.

The vile, pretended brother came with his lordship, — and now they were all seated. O for the descriptive pen of that great master of the human heart, the inimitable Richardson, to paint the different behaviour of the *four* several parties ! — the perfidious Mrs. Williams topp'd her part to a miracle, and pretended to act with all the *dignity* (to deceive our poor girls) of the lady of fortune and fashion.

The



The lovely Peggy and Patty, with hearts almost bursting with gratitude and astonishment at the fine man before them, sometimes stole (as they thought unperceived) a secret glance at the noble visiter.— Alas, deceived girls ! little could you imagine, that the villain before you, whom you looked on as the guardian angel of your family, and to whom you could almost have fallen on your knees in humble gratitude, to have thanked, nay, almost adored for his goodness and generosity — little, I repeat, could you have imagined *this* man was that very identical villain, who had so inhu-

manly committed the late shocking outrage on your innocence; and who was now *meditating* and devising by what steps he could soonest *corrupt* your *hearts*, and reduce you to the level of the most abandoned of your sex!

The grand deceiver, the feigned brother, was all life and gaiety:—it was Peggy and Patty at every word; interspersed with asking them questions relative to Ashdale.—In answering him, their lovely confusion, their innocent bashfulness, and crimson blushes, on being obliged even *to speak* before so fine a *lord*, rendered them at that moment, perhaps, the most beauti-

ful girls in the universe. The arch fiend (his *lordship*) listened to their timid voices, devoured with his greedy eyes their various beauties; and, horrid to tell! he formed a thought of *keeping both* the unhappy girls;—so *sure* was he of his prey not escaping him.—How often did he, whilst gazing on their fine figures, run over in his abandoned mind, (that sink of corruption) that *black* and diabolical hour, which had afforded him a *transient* enjoyment of two the finest girls in the world!—but as his guilty joys were then *imperfect*, he was determined *now* to enjoy all the transport which *willing* beauty can impart.

This evening was spent with much social gaiety, and nothing passed beyond the bounds of strictest decency and decorum: — his lordship was so much *charmed*, that, looking on his watch at ten at night, he protested he thought it had been only eight; he was (he said) to have been at Lady Bab Faddle's rout—at the opera—at the play—and ten other places he named: “But, my dear Mrs. Williams,” (said he) “if you will give me a “Welch-rabbit, I will stay and “chat an hour longer.”—She testified her *sense* of this great honour and *condescension* in his lordship, in high terms. — After supper the  
above

above lady importuned our pretty rustics to sing (they had both, she knew, pretty voices.) — Their confusion now was above all description; — such a request was even death. — “*Dear Mrs. Williams!* — “*how can you*” — (they both cried, their sweet faces covered with blushes.) — His lordship now begged to hear them: — “*Will you, my good Miss Summers, oblige me,*” (said he, with a *voice* and *manner*, as the poet says,

“*Fram'd to make woman false!*”)

K 4

“ Can

“ Can you deny this request ? ” — taking the trembling hand of Peggy in his, and *gently* pressing it, whilst he passionately gazed on her enchanting eyes. — “ Can you *refuse* his lordship any thing ? ” (said Mrs. Williams) — “ *No indeed, I cannot ;* ” was the *soft* answer timidly pronounced from the coral lips of the blushing Peggy. — This answer, so sweetly pronounced, filled the wretch, in whose favour it was spoke, with the highest extacy : — a libertine, like a miser, turns every thing to a construction favourable to his darling passion. — With the most

most trembling confusion our destined *victims* now began a sweet, little, Scotch, rustic air, called "Jockey and Jenny," which they performed very prettily, consistent with the extreme tremor which on this occasion possessed them.—Lord Racket was in perfect raptures, and declared he had rather hear their

" Wood notes

" ——— warbled wild " ———

than even Signora Sestini herself. —" Come, (said his lordship) " I " will give you a song myself," and, tenderly taking the hand of Peggy, (who did not *dare* to withdraw



draw it from a *lord*, and who thought it a great *condescension* in him) his lordship sung with great taste, in a soft, persuasive tone of voice and manner, a favourite air; the words of the song, as well as the music, are particularly tender and pathetic——

“ If love’s a sweet passion,

“ Why does it torment ?” &c. &c.

This song, performed with infinite softness and fine execution, did not lose its effect on the *feeling* heart of Peggy : — she even breathed a soft sigh, unknowing that she did so, at the conclusion of it.

His lordship now ordered a chair

to

to be called, and insisted that Mrs. Williams should bring down, in two or three days, to his country seat, a few miles from town, her young guests—the daughters (said he) of that worthiest of men, Mr. Summers! “You will oblige me, ladies,” (said he, with the most persuasive tone of voice)—“my gardens are large and pleasant, and you will be amused.—Your good friend, Mrs. Williams, will bring you both (my carriage shall fetch you) on Wednesday next.” Our sweet girls, overwhelmed with gratitude, curt’sied low, and blushed their assent.

Mrs.

Mrs. Williams waited on his lordship to the passage, when he softly whispered — “ My *good woman*, take care of *those angels*, of *my Peggy* especially, for I am quite *entranc’d*.”

She returned to the girls ; who, all open frankness, declared they were perfectly charmed. — “ Surely,” (said Peggy) “ no man was ever so good—so agreeable—so noble !—for my part, I was quite *dazzled* when he first appeared ;—and how handsome he is.”——  
 “ I am much mistaken if his lordship does not think you, Madam *Peggy*, very handsome,” (replied

plied Mrs. Williams) — “ nay, for  
 “ my part, he seemed quite charm-  
 “ ed.—Well! as wonderful things  
 “ have happened; — Lord S-----  
 “ married a clergyman’s (his cu-  
 “ rate’s) daughter : — I am sure, if  
 “ Lord Racket is not in love, I ne-  
 “ ver saw a man in love.” — “ For  
 “ Heaven’s sake,” (said Peggy,  
 covered with blushes, and holding  
 the mouth of Mrs. Williams) “ say  
 “ no more on this subject.—Good  
 “ God! think *me* handsome, indeed!  
 “ —It is not for me so much as  
 “ to dare even ——— happy  
 “ will that lady be that Heaven or-  
 “ dains to be his wife :—nay, Mrs.  
 “ Williams,”

" Williams," (said the lovely girl,  
 in all the sweet simple *innocence* of  
 seventeen years of age) " I declare,  
 " if I had about an hundred thou-  
 " sand pounds, and was daughter  
 " to the first duke in the land,  
 " lord Racket should have the  
 " preference: — I say, *if I was* a  
 " fine lady, *mark that!*" — " I  
 " do — I do — my dear girl," (an-  
 swered this false friend,) " but even,  
 " child, as you *now* are, you might  
 " contract the most *noble friendship!*  
 " — a friendship indeed much more  
 " exalted than the married state."  
 — " Good God!" (said both sis-  
 ters) " we thought *marriage* was  
 " the

" the highest state of *friendship* in  
 " this world,"——" Why," (said  
 Mrs. Williams) " there is still a  
 " greater, — for instance," (conti-  
 nued she, raising her voice, and  
 assuming an air of great wisdom  
 and dignity)——" for instance, two  
 " tender hearts, that are united in  
 " one, may live the *life of honour*,  
 " —If their *minds*—their souls are  
 " united, why what matters out-  
 " ward *forms*?" —— " *The life of*  
 " *honour*!" (said Peggy) " what is  
 " that?—I don't understand quite  
 " your argument." —— She how-  
 ever sighed, and starting up, said,  
 " Let us go to bed!" —— which  
 they

they then did : but certain it is, all was not quite at peace in the gentle bosom of Peggy : — she sighed, — was restless : — Patty renewed the dangerous conversation of Mrs. Williams's "*life of honour*." — "What she meant, I dare say," (said she) "was very sensible, though we did not understand it." — From this subject they adverted to the noble generosity of lord Racket, his goodness to their parents, &c. &c. — in fact, they never closed their eyes till morning.

The next day a small box, directed for Miss Summers, arrived,  
with



with two compleat suits of handsome laces for each sister, made up in fashionable caps and ruffles, also two very genteel pieces of silk for gowns for each — no note, — no letter was with this box. — “ Who — who can it come from ? ” — (said the wondering — unsuspicious girls.) — — “ I guess from whom,” — (said Mrs. Williams, with a mysterious air) — “ there never was such a man ! — he is an angel indeed — Heavens ! — how delightfully noble ! ” — — “ Why — what — who do you think ? ” — (said Peggy) “ it must be sent in

VOL. II.                      L                      “ a mis-

" a mistake — it cannot be for  
" us."——

The feigned brother now appeared, to make a morning visit.—

" This," (said he) " is all lord  
" Racket's doing ; — he told me  
" yesterday, that probably your fi-  
" nances in this great town might  
" be low, and that, as the friend  
" of *our father*, he would think of  
" some little present that might be  
" of real use ; — you must never  
" mention this — he is too *delicate*  
" to be thanked for it ; — therefore  
" take no sort of notice, but have  
" the gowns made. How *confido-*  
" *rate* is this noble young man in  
" every

"every incident in life!—how dis-  
 "interestedly *noble*!" — The girls,  
 astonished, did as their brother and  
 Mrs. Williams advised, relative to  
 this very genteel present. — "But  
 "the *manner* of it," (said Peggy)  
 "is so *delicate*!"——Ah, poor de-  
 luded girl!——

The day now arrived in which  
 this little party were to set out for  
 lord Racket's seat in the country :  
 —in fact, to our sisters, believing  
 all that they believed, there was  
 not the least *impropriety* in this visit.  
 They looked on his lordship as the  
*chief friend* of their beloved parent,  
 and his most noble benefactor ;

they regarded Mrs. Williams as a most worthy, valuable woman;—and their *brother* (as they thought the wretch to be) attended them on this little jaunt; so that in fact, *impropriety* was out of the question.

Our party having now arrived at his lordship's seat, were received with the utmost kindness and politeness. — The poor girls had an elegant apartment allotted for them, and a servant to attend them:—they were lost in astonishment at all they saw,—the magnificence of the house, — the splendor of the furniture, — the beauty and variety of the gardens,—the temples, grottos, &c.

&c. &c. excited their admiration, — scenes so new were perfectly enchanting. — Peggy rose the next morning after her arrival early, and wandered in the wilderness in the park, till she found a small hermitage, where she seated herself:— she was deeply contemplating the beauties of the delightful spot, and “Heavens,” (said she, softly) “what  
“ a man is the noble owner of all  
“ this! — how hospitable! — how  
“ affable! — how considerate to  
“ every living being! — May my  
“ poor father but live to see him  
“ *once*, to thank him for all his  
“ goodness to his girls, and I

L 3 “ could

"could die content."——That instant, on looking up, she spied lord Racket coming down the little path that led to the hermitage: — she rose, and would have retired, and, blushing excessively at his appearance, (though she knew not why) was walking out: — but his lordship, who had purposely followed her, entreated her to sit down for a few moments. His behaviour was *guarded*; but if it had been less so than it was, not the least shadow of doubt of his honour could have arisen in the mind of our poor blushing girl:—he artfully began a discourse of her parents; — of what  
 he

he intended to do for them, and likewise for the children. — This was too much for the *dutiful*, grateful heart of our worthy girl to hear, without endeavouring to testify her sense of it: — “O, my lord, you are” — she could only say, bursting into tears.

His lordship clasped her to his breast, and, tenderly kissing her cheek, begged her not to think of *trifling* favours done to her family, — “I am his *friend*:—you are my *friend* also,” (said the artful man, taking her hand and pressing it to his bosom) — “in *friendship*, Miss Peggy, there can be no *reserves*;

L 4                    “ — what



“ —what say you? will you be *my*  
 “ *friend?* ”—The sweet girl trembling, though she knew not why, (for she had not the least idea of being alarmed at his behaviour, or words) replied, “ she should be most  
 “ happy to oblige him in all things.”  
 —How far this conversation would have been carried, is uncertain; as his lordship’s valet, who had been searching for him in the park, on particular business, now appeared: on delivering his message, lord Racket rose, and walked to the house, leaving our lovely girl in a state of mind she had never before experienced:—her gentle bosom, in  
 fact,

fact, from this late behaviour of lord Racket's, was but too susceptible of a tender impression in his favour. — She, however, knew it not : — she sighed, — she fancied it was her *gratitude* that so much oppressed her heart — and with slow steps advanced to the house : — the infamous master of it was too deeply learned in the knowledge of a *female* heart, not to see he was by no means indifferent to his fair guest; and was meditating how he should most opportunely (violence now out of the question) reap all the advantage from it, he so ardently desired.

That

That day arrived from town a libertine baronet, (Sir Harry Ranger) and three ladies of pleasure; — “Worshipful society,” as Shakspeare says. — Dancing, singing, romping, and much *freedom* of discourse, began to be carried on. — The innocent sisters at first often thought what they heard and saw “*very strange* ;” — but Mrs. Williams assured them it was quite the reigning fashion, or *ton*, for the fine folks to talk and act without reserve or ceremony. — “Good sirs !” (said Patty) “well ! I am surprised at that !” — The baronet (associate in every vice with lord Racket)

singled

singled out the younger sister for *his* prey :—he romp'd with her, had stolen many kisses, and other little liberties had been taken :—all which passed for no more than the *fashion* of the times.

Lord Racker, finding at length that his fair guest, Peggy, *bad a heart* as fully tender, and touched in his favour, as he could desire (for Peggy he now solely fixed on, and left Patty for the baronet) was determined to accomplish his wishes as soon as possible :—for this end, he proposed that evening in the wilderness (which was to be illuminated with lamps) a kind of masqued ball, and the  
most

most enchanting music was provided.—The company met in this beautiful sequestered spot at nine at night.

Mrs. Williams had dressed the *destined victims* with her own hands, in the most bewitching manner:—Peggy as a Flora, crowned with roses; and Patty as a Milk-maid:—lord Racket wore the habit of a sultan, and made a most dazzling appearance:—the baronet personated a hay-maker. After a very elegant collation, the company danced till two in the morning, when they began separating into small parties, to different parts of  
the

the close walks in the adjoining wood :—the vile seducer, lord Racket, having at length pursued his charming Peggy into the most retired part of this recess, by pleading an excess of passion, and by softening her soul (too much disposed in his favour) with a most violent declaration of love, (we grieve to say) compleated the ruin of this unhappy young woman.—The seduction of her equally unfortunate sister was also finished the same fatal night.

Who knows not (at least has not heard of) the rapid progress of vice?  
— In one fortnight from the above  
wretched

wretched period, *the sisters* (would we could still call them *innocent*) could listen without a blush to discourses of the *freest* kind, — could even begin to relish, and even to smile at many little liberties taken in their presence with the women of the town, who occasionally came down to this seat of libertinism. These unfortunate girls were not left one single moment for reflection, — every kind of dissipated pleasure — every amusement that could suspend *thinking*, was put in practice. — They were now drest with all the elegance of taste, and imagination could hardly picture two



more lovely women. Milliners and mantua-makers were set to work, and a French friseur employed to torture their naturally beautiful ringlets of the finest hair in the world, into an hundred different ridiculous fashions of the present hair-dressing age.

Mrs. Williams, who still made one of this *virtuous* group, on seeing their *heads* metamorphosed into the modern style, told the sisters, "they now looked like *christians* :—

"Well—and pray, Miss Summers," (said the vile woman) "how do you

"like the *life of honour* you now lead?

"—is it not delightful? do you

"not

" not abound with every superflui-  
 " ty this world can afford ?—is not  
 " this a thousand times better than  
 " the melancholy notion you once  
 " had of starving yourself in a gar-  
 " ret, in getting a livelihood by  
 " your needle ? — ridiculous ! —  
 " Here you live like a duchess ! —  
 " and then, how delightful to live  
 " with the man one loves ! as you do  
 " this noble lord."—"Indeed I do,"  
 (said Peggy, sighing)—"love him—  
 " tenderly love him."

His lordship now took Peggy to  
 town, as did the baronet her sister :  
 —they were placed in extreme hand-  
 some lodgings, not far from each  
 other,

other, and in fact were now in the style of *high keeping*. — In which *deplorable* state we will leave them for a while, to see what progress good Mr. and Mrs. Bennet made towards a discovery of the sisters' way of life and abode; which, by the *merest* chance, they at length effected in the following manner :

As Mr. Bennet was one day walking through Pall-Mall, he was taken with a complaint in his stomach, called the heart-burn, to which he was very subject :—he felt in his pockets for some lozenges that are efficacious in that disorder, but not finding any, he stopped at a per-

fumer's shop to purchase some. Whilst a boy in the shop was looking for these lozenges, a very smart footman entered, and, addressing himself to the journeyman (a pert-looking young fellow) asked him if the Eau de luce bottle, and the Italian Mille-fleur essence, were ready for Miss Summers?—At the name of *Summers*, Mr. Bennet was all attention, and the footman being departed, "Pray," (said he to the journeyman) "what Miss Summers is that?" "—where does she live?"—"It is the famous Peggy Summers," (said the coxcomb) "she is kept by lord Racker. I think her sister, who

“ who is kept by sir Harry Ranger,  
 “ the prettier girl. We shall have  
 “ them upon the town in due time,  
 “ I suppose, for they have been in  
 “ *keeping* some months,—and their  
 “ gentlemen are not the most con-  
 “ stant men in the world.”

Poor Mr. Bennet had gained intelligence enough ; — he walked home to his wife ; and she received the news with many tears : though she could hardly imagine, but that they must be in so lamentable a state.—The next morning, after an hundred sighs, she sat down to write to the poor parents.—It is needless to insert her letter, as it consisted of

what the reader already knows:—  
 she informed them, their daughters  
 were in the hands of lord Racket  
 and sir Harry Ranger.

This *fat* letter arrived at a period  
 of time which made it doubly af-  
 fecting:—it came on the night of  
 Peggy's *birth-day*: this was a general  
 day of joy and festivity, the children  
 were indulged with a fidler to play  
 country dances, whilst the young  
 men and maidens joined in this scene  
 of innocent merriment:—Mrs. Sum-  
 mers had made a little cake, in cele-  
 bration of the festival, and the good  
 man, her husband, had preserved a  
 bottle of ale for the joyous occa-  
 sion. — This happy group of inno-  
 cent

cent people were in the midst of their merriment, and drinking Peggy's health, when the fatal letter arrived. — "It is—it is —" (cried the over-joyed parents) "from our " dear cousin Bennet," (the moment they cast their eyes on the superscription.) The young folks and children gathered round the *now delighted* Mr. Summers, whilst he broke the seal, and at one view, with eager eyes, devoured the horrid contents. — "My God!" he could only exclaim, and groaning, fell prostrate on the ground. — The neighbours instantly flocked in, where they found the miserable mo-



ther (who by this time had learnt the shocking tidings) fallen on the breast of her husband, equally insensible.—Happy had it been, had they never more returned to life; but by the unremitting endeavours of all present, and of Miss Harvey, (who, on the news, was bordering on distraction) the wretched parents once more returned to feel their anguish. Their complaints would have moved an heart of stone.—

“What *both*,” (cried the father)—

“*both* my children! O shame!—O

“infamy!—all but this I could

“have borne.—No, no, Mrs. Bennet, it cannot be,—it is not *my*

“children.

" children—*my precious* girls, who  
 " have basely yielded to infamy."

The miserable, tender Mrs. Summers, fell into successive faintings; in which good Mrs. Harvey thought it most expedient to move her to her own house; as the wretched couple's being together only increased their mutual grief.—Mr. Harvey was luckily gone a journey, therefore his tender wife (for tender she was to every suffering object) *ventured* to take poor Mrs. Summers to Moss Hill, where we will leave her for a few days, to return to the equally wretched father.—Before morning, he had raved himself into

M 4.            a strong

a strong delirium, continually calling on the names of Peggy and Patty. — In this dreadful state he continued for some days, when he became calm :—but, alas ! it was the most terrible of all situations, the *calmness of fixed despair*. He arose in the morning, apparently *composed*, as the bye-standers thought, and, having put seven shillings in his pocket, (all the money he had) walked out of the house, as they imagined to go to Carlisle, to a friend there, whom he often consulted.— In this wretched state of *calm despair*, did the worthy, distressed man, form the desperate resolution of setting out

out for London in search of his children. — He soon reached the great turnpike road, *muttering* as he went :—the next day he overtook the coach, where, riding sometimes on the top of it—for what would seven shillings do towards a journey to London, of above two hundred miles ? — and sometimes walking, and by the help of returned chaises, &c. he in one fortnight actually reached the great metropolis. Having an exact direction to Mrs. Bennet's, he immediately repaired there. But judge that lady's amazement, on seeing him enter her dining-room, in a situation which——but she will  
best

best tell the sad tale, in the following letter she sent to Miss Harvey.

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LETTER XVI.

*Mrs. Bennet to Miss Harvey.*

London.

MADAM,

**Y**OU can be no stranger to the melancholy account I was obliged to send to Ashdale:—in consequence of it, I imagine, you have heard that poor Mr. Summers is come to London.—O Miss Harvey, I have *such* a tale to relate!—and,  
as

as you are particularly interested in the fate of this unhappy family, I hasten to write, as soon as my spirits have permitted me to take up my pen.—But, not to keep you in suspense — One afternoon last week, Mr. Bennet and I alone, drinking coffee, a servant informed us a gentleman, who said his name was Summers, from Cumberland, desired to speak with us.—“O Heavens!” (said I) “shew him in.”—He entered the room with a countenance pale and haggard, and, advancing to us with quick steps, and a wildness in his air,—“Cousin Bennet,” (said he to me) “where—where are my children?”

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“dren ?

“dren? I *demand* of you my Peggy,  
“my Patty!”

O what woe was impressed on his  
countenance! — “How do you, my  
“good old friend?” (said both my  
husband and myself) “we will talk  
“of what you mention to-morrow.”  
“No—no—no,” (he eagerly cried)  
“this instant, I beseech you, to re-  
“lieve a father’s bursting heart! —  
“but for Heaven’s sake give me a  
“crust of bread — I faint for lack  
“of nourishment — I have not  
“tasted food these two days.” —  
He here sunk down into a chair,  
through excess of grief and fatigue.  
O madam, judge my grief, my  
amaze-

amazement at this miserable moment!—I got some mulled wine, which we poured down his throat; after which he opened his eyes, and with a look which wounded my soul, he surveyed the room with a *piercing* glance, as if expecting to find his daughters: — then looking up to me, most piteously,—“ They “ are not—are not *here*,” cried he, bursting into tears, and weeping aloud; and sat for some moments in a situation that would have melted an heart of flint.—He then muttered something of “ vile—vile girls!” and suddenly starting up, caught my husband’s arm,—“ Come, my  
“ old

“ old friend,” (said he) “ let us go  
 “ —let us go this moment to the  
 “ house of the villains who have  
 “ robbed my *precious* children of  
 “ their innocence.” — In vain Mr.  
 Bennet, by the gentlest and most  
 persuasive words, endeavoured to  
 assure him the enquiry had better  
 be made the next day, (knowing it  
 could certainly not avail, and might  
 probably be the means of some bad  
 consequence, if the infamous lord  
 Racket, or the baronet, should hap-  
 pen to be at home :) but in vain did  
 my husband argue;—in vain did I  
 beseech the poor distracted man, not  
 that evening at least to think of it.

—At

— At length Mr. Benner, beckoning me to the window, whispered me, that he was convinced, if not indulged in this request, some fatal event might be the consequence, and that he feared he would even lay violent hands on his own life:—

“ I will just go with him,” said he,  
 “ and take a servant with us, to the  
 “ door of lord Racket. No mischief  
 “ can ensue, if I go with the miserable man; and he certainly will  
 “ go, if I do not, and most likely  
 “ raise a mob in the street, the  
 “ consequences of which would be  
 “ dreadful.” — I acquiesced with my husband, though terrified at  
 the

the idea of their going at all.—At length out they sallied.—You will imagine what I suffered in their absence.—The distance from lord Racket's was but short, and in about an hour, they returned:—but, heavens! what a picture of absolute despair was my wretched cousin:—he sat calmly down:—not a single syllable escaped his lips, and dropt into a little slumber, during which Mr. Bennet gave me the following particulars:—That they actually went to lord Racket's, in—street; and enquired of the porter if his lordship was at home;—“Tell him,” (said Mr. Summers, with

with great firmness) “ that a clergy-  
 “ man, of the name of *Summers*,  
 “ from Cumberland, desires to  
 “ speak with him.” — A servant  
 went up (continued my husband)  
 with this message, and soon returned  
 with these words: “ My lord, says  
 “ the old parson may go back  
 “ again to Cumberland as he came;  
 “ and bids him go about his busi-  
 “ ness.” — This answer (said my  
 husband) I thought would justly  
 irritate the worthy, abused man; but  
 what was my astonishment, on be-  
 holding his countenance exhibit no  
 marks of anger! — he suddenly clasp-  
 ed his hand to his heart, — “ Cou-  
 “ sin,” (said he) “ I am faint, very



“ faint.” — My servant ran to a shop near, and got a few drops and some water : we got into a hackney-coach. — “ How do you, my dear “ worthy friend ?” (said I, pressing his hand.) “ Pretty well,” — (said he, faintly) “ pretty well.” — Let a bed be got ready this instant (said my husband) and a physician sent for ; alas ! I fear, I fear he is very ill indeed ! — “ This sleep” (said I) “ may be of service ;” (weeping) “ O Heaven restore him !”

“ This slumber” (returned Mr. Bennet) “ I fear, is the last effort of “ exhausted nature.” Alas ! he pre-  
saged but too true,

The

The poor man, after a short broken sleep, fixed his eyes on me, and, with a look inexpressibly moving, "Cousin," (said he, with a sort of half-smile which cut me to the soul) "have you any daughters?" —

O Miss Harvey, I must here lay down my pen, and weep at the heart-rending words, — the faint, dying sentences of this most suffering man!

We now tried to move him to a bedchamber. — "Where—where" (said he, his poor brain quite gone) — "where are my *good* little girls, "Peggy and Patty?—*They* used to

" nurse me, — to talk to me, — to  
 " sing to me : — Hark ! *indeed*, that  
 " is Peggy's soft sweet pipe I  
 " hear," (listening as if he heard a  
 voice) — " and my little sparkling  
 " Patty, — see how she *fleets* before  
 " my *eager* eyes ! — Ah ! do not  
 " think to escape me ! " — At  
 length we got him into bed. — The  
 physician arrived, who declared, at  
 once, he was going very fast. — He  
 fixed his dim eyes (what despair in  
 them ! ) on the physician — " Have  
 " you *children*, sir ? — hah ! — who  
 " — who are you ? the villain who  
 " has robbed me of my precious"  
 ——— a convulsion fit prevented  
 his

his saying more at that moment :—  
we thought him gone for ever :—  
but in a few hours he again  
appeared calm ; — and, looking  
up, “ Cousin Bennet,” (said he  
mournfully, and but just articu-  
lately) — “ my heart, — my poor  
“ heart is quite—quite broke ;”—  
and with a heavy sigh expired.——

O Miss Harvey !—but what shall  
we say ? — poor mortals as we are !  
—I gazed some time on the pallid  
corse. — “ This, this” (exclaim-  
ed I) “ is the cruel work of seduc-  
“ tion !”——

I must for a few moments here  
lay down my pen ; my mind is too

much oppressed to proceed at present.

Tuesday.

Our poor, and ever to be lamented kinsman, was interred privately last night.

Mrs. Summers, (my heart bleeds for her) can never surely survive this last sad stroke.—I beg to hear, as soon as possible, how she does, and if you have broke the mournful tidings (I now send) to her.

What a helpless little family!—but Mr. Bennet and I will do all we can for them; we are considering of measures for that purpose.

It

It is some comfort the poor children have your good family so near them in their present distress.

I am, my good young lady, (with again intreating you to write as soon as possible)

Your obliged and sincere  
(but at present afflicted)

Friend,  
*Sarah Bennet.*

P.S. I enclose a bank-bill for poor Mrs. Summers and the children.

*End of the Second Volume.*

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It is some comfort the poor chil-

dren have your good family to near-

them in their present distress.

I am, my good young lady, (with

again, I trust, you, to write as

soon as possible)

Your obliged and devoted

(out as present address)

Yours truly

M. S. I enclose a packet for you

Mrs. Sumner and the children.

Yours truly